

INTRODUCTION

It is among the most fundamental Christian doctrines that eternal life is gained through faith in Jesus Christ. This is among the most familiar things for us to hear. The most-memorized verse in the Bible is this:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

So, as we study through the writings of our Lord's apostle Paul, to hear Paul mention faith and eternal life together is no surprise. Remember from chapter 1, Paul said:

1 Timothy 1:15-16 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

What Paul mentioned near the beginning of this letter to Timothy, he re-visits here near the end, in chapter 6. But now faith and eternal life are mentioned not really in regards to the sinner believing, but in regards to the Christian continuing to believe, to the servant of Jesus Christ enduring in faith through the troubles of this life.

TEXT

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

BODY

I. Terminology for Talking About Faith and Eternal Life

- A. In expressing this wonderful doctrine, we use certain words, which to the original readers in the Greek NT would be easily understood, but in our English translations can be confusing
- B. Believe and Faith
 1. In the Greek NT
 - a) *pisteuo* verb - to believe
 - b) *pistis* noun - faith
 2. In our English Bibles
 - a) verb "Believe" - old English word
 - b) noun "Faith" - Latin word *fide* via French
- C. "Eternal" and "Everlasting"
 1. Greek same word G166
 2. Latin is consistently *aeternam*
 3. Wycliffe is consistently "euerlastynge," which is an Old English word
 4. Tyndale used both "eternal" and "everlasting"
 - a) this was followed in the Geneva and KJV
 - b) this was retained in the NKJV
 5. 1885 RV and following consistently use "eternal"
 6. except NKJV continues the Tyndale-KJV variation
- D. So, when we say "believe" and "faith" we are talking about the same thing
- E. When we say "eternal" and "everlasting" we are talking about the same thing

II. The Wonder of Eternal Life

- A. Genesis 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."
- B. Genesis 5:5 So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.
- C. We know that we die; everyone dies.
- D. Those who know Genesis chapter 2 know that we die because that is what our sins deserve. We have earned death.
- E. How, then, can there be any thought of us having eternal life?
- F. Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 1. what we have earned is death
 2. but what God's gift to us is eternal life
 3. and this is in Christ Jesus our Lord

III. The Most Basic Truth About Faith and Eternal Life

A. Believe in Jesus and you will have eternal life

B. Ways our Lord Jesus expressed this for us to understand

1. **look** John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (15) that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
2. **drink** John 4:13-14 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, (14) but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."
3. **come** John 5:39-40 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. (40) But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.
4. **eat** John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."
5. **follow** John 10:27-28 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (28) And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

C. Note that all those ways our Savior gave us to understand what faith is do not convey the idea that we are earning eternal life. Eternal life is not earned by us; we do not do something to deserve it; instead, eternal life is given by Jesus Christ; we, in faith, receive it

D. To believe on Jesus Christ is not to work for Him, hoping to get eternal life, but to depend on His work to get eternal life for us

IV. How The Believing Will Have Eternal Life

- A. Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment - How, then, will those believing in Jesus Christ have eternal life?
- B. Jesus Christ will raise up the believing at the last day
 1. John 6:40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."
 2. John 11:25-27 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (27) She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."
 - a) he who believes in Jesus, then dies, shall live
 - b) he who believes in Jesus and lives, shall never die
 3. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. (15) For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. (16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.
- C. But what about the judgment and the wrath of God?
 1. Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
 2. Romans 5:8-10 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

- V. How We Are to Think of Faith and Eternal Life During This Earthly Life
- A. Fight the good fight of faith to lay hold on eternal life
 - 1. this is the language of warfare or athletic games
 - a) there is a prize for the victor
 - b) the soldiers or the athletes contend for the prize
 - c) those who win get to have the rewards
 - 2. so, the Christian, believing in Jesus for eternal life, is to live this earthly life as such a soldier or athlete spiritually
 - B. The world, our own flesh, the devil and the demons are tempting us, trying
 - 1. to distract us from serving our Lord Jesus
 - 2. to dissuade us from believing the truth about Him
 - 3. to discourage us from following Him
 - C. We are to fight against such tempters, resisting such temptations, with such spiritual weapons as the truth of the scriptures, righteousness, faith, hope, prayer, and love.
 - D. We are to see all such spiritual warfare or holy exercise as being in pursuit of the prize, which is eternal life

CONCLUSION

Philippians 3:8-14 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 90:1-2

Conner - Scripture Reading - Numbers 21:5-9

Benediction - Jude 21

Angie - Prelude

Audrey - Trinity 26 "Our God, Our Help In Ages Past"

Angie - Trinity 431 "Just As I Am"

Angie - Trinity 547 "My Jesus, I Love Thee"

Fight the good fight of faith

lay hold on eternal life

This is the great prize.

Other, less worthy prizes will try to get your attention.

John 10:25-29 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. (26) But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. (27) My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (28) And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (29) My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.